

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

- Please delete claims 16, and 18-19. A complete listing of all claims and their status in the application is as follows:

1. (previously presented) A method for reflow-soldering a part:
replacing air around an unsoldered part with a first inert gas;
removing the first inert gas to form a vacuum around the unsoldered part;
vacuum reflow soldering the unsoldered part to form a reflow-soldered part;
providing a second inert gas to fill the vacuum around the reflow-soldered part; and
replacing the second inert gas with air around the reflow-soldered part.
2. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
the first and second inert gases are the same gas.
3. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
vacuum reflow soldering comprises heating around an integrated circuit package on a
printed circuit board having solder paste printed thereon at a plurality of
different temperatures in the vacuum.
4. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
removing the first inert gas includes simultaneously heating an integrated circuit
package on a printed circuit board having solder paste printed thereon at a
plurality of different temperatures; and
replacing the second inert gas includes simultaneously cooling the integrated circuit
package on the printed circuit board having solder thereon at a plurality of
different temperatures.
5. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 comprising:
moving an integrated circuit package on a printed circuit board in at least one
direction of horizontally, vertically, and a combination thereof from replacing
the air, removing the first inert gas, reflow soldering, providing the second
inert gas, through replacing the second inert gas.

6. (previously presented) A method for reflow soldering an integrated circuit package on a printed circuit board comprising:

replacing air with a first inert gas around the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board;

removing the first inert gas to form a vacuum around the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board;

moving in a first move the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board;

vacuum reflow soldering the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board;

moving in a second move the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board;

providing a second inert gas to fill the vacuum around the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board;

replacing the second inert gas with air around the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board;

moving in a third move the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board; and
filling the vacuum with air, the first inert gas, or the second inert gas in respective first, second, or third moves after moving the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board.

7. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein:

vacuum reflow soldering provides the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board having solder bumps with 90% of the solder bumps formed having less than 10% empty voids and 10% of the solder bumps having less than 20% empty voids as a percentage of volume.

8. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein:

vacuum reflow soldering comprises heating around the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board having solder paste printed thereon at a plurality of different temperatures in the vacuum.

9. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 6 wherein:

removing the first inert gas includes simultaneously heating the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board having solder paste printed thereon at a plurality of different temperatures; and

replacing the second inert gas includes simultaneously cooling the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board having solder thereon at a plurality of different temperatures in the unloading unit after moving the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board in the first move.

10. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 6 comprising:
moving the integrated circuit package on the printed circuit board in at least one direction of horizontal, vertical, and a combination thereof.

Claims 11-20 (canceled)